



**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
6:30 P.M., Tuesday, October 17, 2023
Bennettsville Public Safety Complex**

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER Mayor Prince
2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Tyrone Davis
3. ROLL CALL
District 5-Tyron Abraham
District 2- Tyrone Davis
Mayor- Carolyn Prince
District 1- Wanda Weaver
District 6- Gregory Scott
District 3- Allen Taylor
District 4- Jean Quick-not present at the time
4. APPROVAL/CORRECTION OF MINUTES
 - A. Regular Council Meeting; Tuesday, September 19, 2023- Mr. Davis made a motion to approve the Regular Council Meeting of Tuesday, September 19,2023. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Mr. Taylor abstained, due to his absence. Motion passed unanimously.
5. PUBLIC REQUESTS/ PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS
 - A. Employee Anniversaries-Melvin Johnson, Jr., Gas, 12 years; Tyler Smith, Police, 5years; Donald McElveen, Public Works, 4 years; Leverne Miles, Public Works, 2 years; Robert Cousar, Public Works, 2 years
 - B. New Hires & Promotions-Shanatava Davis, Police; Amani Sinkler, Electric; Quenton Baker; Emmanuel Williams, Police; Ronald Hamilton, Fire; Jonathan Beggs, Police; Garrett Williams, Planning & Zoning
Promotions- Dustin Bruce, Asst. Fire Chief ;Scot Williams, Distr./Coll. Supervisor; Johnny Roscoe, Distr./Coll. Worker A; Griffin Norris, Distr./Coll. Foreman; Frankie Cummings, Distr./Coll. Worker B; Ezekiel Miller, Gas Line Worker; Jacob Stott, Dist./Coll. Worker B; Elaine German, Lieutenant/Patrol; Sammy Crosland, Lieutenant/Administrative; Steven Wilkes, Utility Support/Build. Insp.
 - C. PeeDee Coalition (Domestic Violence Awareness Month)- On behalf of the PeeDee Coalition Ms. Wendy Woods stated that every October is Domestic Violence Awareness month. Ms. Woods thanked Mr. Simon, Mayor Prince and Council for always supporting their mission at The PeeDee Coalition. She went on saying that she appreciate the partnership from the city in all they do. They have a transitional shelter in

Marlboro County and free counseling for those who go through domestic violence. She ended by asking citizens to wear purple on Thursday to represent Domestic Violence. They are located at 108 South Parsonage St. Mayor Prince made a donation to the PeeDee Coalition , “Niya Lemonade Stand” during this time.

- D. Humane Society Update, Ms. Jennifer Hyduke-Stated she spoke with Mr. Simon several times and he thought it would be good for the Humane Society to come in and give an update on what’s going on. Ms. Hyduke gave a brief synopsis of where they are today. “In 2010 and forward they worked with the city and county regarding stray and abandoned animals. Much has transpired between 2010 and now. In 2018, the county agreed to contract the operations of Marlboro County Animal Shelter to the Humane Society. Also, the City of Bennettsville contracted with the Humane Society for Shelter Services and closed the city shelter.” In 2020, they started some outreach programs including “Unchained Marlboro where they provide services to people who do not have the money, but they want to keep their animals. When funding and grants are available, we continued food banks, vaccine clinics, spay & neuter voucher programs. Also, in 2020, City of Bennettsville Animal Ordinances were presented and passed unanimously. Humane Society was awarded a grant to construct a new building on their property to serve as a temporary safe haven for victims of domestic violence, for their pets. In 2023, they were awarded by Kill South Carolina as Organization of the Year out of all the shelters in the entire state. They also received Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, which is the recognition for achieving a no-kill status during the calendar year 2022 by exceeding 9% of the save rate for dogs and cats. The data that has been shown for the community. “Unchained Marlboro, they helped 67 families. Discounted spay & neuter surgeries ,416 vouchers for surgeries, pets for domestic violence survivors house to low-cost spay& neuter to residents who can’t afford it was 722. Lastly, Ms. Hyduke stated that, On November 8th we will meet with Mr. Simon to see what solutions we may can come with if we find ourselves in a position again to close the doors for a certain period of time.” During this time, Council Wanda Weaver presented a check for \$500 to the Humane Society.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Darcel Simmons-Stated she just came to say, “Thank you to Mr. Simon for a job well done.” She attended the council meeting on September 19th with an issue and in 48 hours it was handled. Brain Braddick-A field representative for Congressman Russell Frye. He wanted to let citizens know that their offices are up and running. If you need help with passport, veterans’ and social security issues.

7. SECOND READING AND PASSAGE IN FULL OF ORDINANCES

No Business

8. FIRST READING AND ADVERTISEMENT OF ORDINANCES

No Business

9. PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS

No Business

10. GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION

- A. Holiday Schedule for 2024-Councilman Tyron Abraham wants to consider Juneteenth into the holiday schedule. He stated that the Municipal Association observe that Holiday,

as well and he would like to see if the city will be able to do so too. Mr. Scott moved that we table the Holiday Schedule for 2024 for an addition of Juneteenth to the Holiday Schedule for 2024. Mr. Abraham seconded. Passed unanimously.

- B. Property Consideration for HUD Pro Housing Grant- The SC Office of Resilience is assisting the city with a grant application to build housing in Bennettsville, SC. This is a pilot program with a non-matching grant. This funding was identified as assistance to those who take advantage of the buyout to relocate to another home. This grant also allows for housing development to remaining citizens. The application asks the applicant to identify potential areas for residential growth as part of the application. The application is looked upon favorably when an entity already has property (401 Center Street) identified with infrastructure in place. The application has not been submitted. The area identified by city administration and eligible for use (according to SCOR).

Approving Action: A motion to approve the use of 401 Center Street as part of the HUD pro housing grant. **No action taken.**

11. REPORTS AND INFORMATION PRESENTATION

- A. Property Sale (Update) 102 & 104 Main St. City Administration attended a closing for 102 & 104 Main Street with Attorney Jason Luck. Payment was rendered and keys were given to buyer Mr. Kendricks Douglas.

- B. Boards and Commissions Vacancies-

Board of Architectural Review/Tree Committee – promotes the purpose and objectives of the City’s Historic district ordinance, review and recommend to City Council the designation of individual historic properties and districts and construction or demolition pertaining to or affecting duly designated historic properties. The term of office for each member shall be two years. **Three (3) vacancies.**

Board of Zoning and Housing Appeals – shall have the powers and duties to hear and decide appeals of decisions made by City Administration. The term of office for each member shall be two years. **Three (3) vacancies.**

Planning Commission – shall hear proposed amendments to the zoning ordinance and map pursuant to SC Code 6-29-760(A). The term of office for each member shall be three years. **Three (3) vacancies.**

- C. Business Report-Listed below are the new businesses in the city.

- Touched By Tosha (Hair Salon) 134 S. Marlboro St.
- Salvage Galley on Broad (Antique Shop) 515 Broad St.

12. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR

- A. Bennettsville 101 Announcement- As part of the community engagement initiative, city administration is announcing the “Bennettsville 101” Community Program. This program is designed to educate citizens about the intricates of city operations and encourage them to be part of the process. The sessions will educate the public on how to serve on boards & commissions along with giving them basic government operations training. We are striving to have the most informed citizens in the state (misinformation can often be addressed with accurate information). Dates are TBD. First Session will be 1hr -1 ½ hrs. First Session will be Local Government 101. Second Session is Boards of Commissions. Third Session will be Planning & Zoning. Fourth Session is Law Enforcement 101 Community Policing. Fifth Session will be Downtown Revitalization.

Lastly, City Budget 101.

B. **Upcoming Workshop (October 31, 2023)**

- Grant Updates
- Parks & Rec. Master Plan Updates
- Parking and Storage of Certain Vehicles (Amended Ordinance 152.091)
- Flood Plain Management Draft Update

13. NON-AGENDA ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

Mr. Simon thanked council and Mayor for their continued support as well as all citizens who are supportive of city operations. He stated that, "I've received overwhelming support from the community, and I appreciate every interaction. Thank you to all of those who visited the office to share your thoughts on economic development, downtown revitalization, and many other matters of this great city...and thank you to the citizens I run into everyday who take the time to introduce themselves to me and express support- this means a lot to me, and I cherish every moment. October 28 will mark 100 days in office as your city executive and I'm so proud to serve in this capacity. With a strong focus on fostering innovation and community development, we have made significant strides toward our collective vision of a thriving, vibrant, business-friendly city. I am immensely grateful for the support and collaboration of this council, as these accomplishments would not have been possible without our collective commitment to progress." Mr. Simon presented a summary overview of a few accomplishments during the first 100 days of his tenure. This includes: The city's first Inaugural City Leadership Retreat, Establishment of the City's first Pocket Park, Launch of Director of Business Development and Grants Manager, First-Ever City Job Fair, 10% increase for employees acting in positions, Electric Department Personnel & Training, City Administrator participating in Main Street initiatives directly, City Administrator's Thursday morning downtown visits to businesses, Reconvene Boards & Commission Meetings, City/County Partnership during the redistricting of the city and sharing information, Façade Grant modification to cover 100% awning replacements, and lastly, Exit interviews implemented.

Mayor Prince stated that the St. Michael United Methodist Church will have a dedication and unveiling for a South Carolina Historic Marker on Sunday, October 22, 2023, @ 4PM, on church grounds. "The existing building was first used as construction of the existing building started in 1919 by local artist and an architect whose first African American Architect of South Carolina State College, Dr. Miller and Mr. Whitaker. then and that building was first used on October 23, 1923. So, this is a historical event for the church. The marker was done and received it and it's going to be erected and they will have a small service. This is the history in the making for that church. So, you're all invited to participate in it. Next, she thanked Mr. Simon for organizing Civics 101. She thanked The Humane Society and PeeDee Coalition for their presentations. She also congratulated the City on their first Job Fair with 7 new hires and 10 promotions.

Mr. Abaraham thanked all city employees for everything they do and it's not a routine speech for him. He stated that, "I truly appreciate the job and the work that they do. Also, a special thank you to employees in the departments that are working extra and putting in time and overtime because I know that can be stressful, can be tiresome, but I just hope that better days are ahead." Next, he thanked the Fire, Gas and Water Departments. Last Wednesday an incident happened in town and crews stayed out late correcting the issue. Also, looking at upgrades for Firemen at the Fire Department in their sleeping areas and upgrading equipment. Lastly, he thanked the citizens of District 5, his district. He appreciate everything they do.

Mr. Davis thanked all employees for what they do for the city. He went on saying how proud he

was of the new Administrator and what he's doing. He also stated, "I am proud of where we are at and where we are going."

Ms. Weaver welcomed the new businesses and thanked Mr. Simon for his idea of recognizing all new businesses, that way citizens know they are there. Next, she asked about the light bills that are due on the 10th of the month. She wanted to know what was going on with that because they don't come out on the 10th of the month anymore. Will they have extra days to pay?

Mr. Scott stated to have a little faith in the employees. He can see the evidence now with 7 new hires, 10 promotions, and then the Administrator created 2 more positions and we had . "With the first 100 days the City Administrator went over the things that he and his team have accomplished. It's amazing." Lastly, he commended Mr. Simon and his staff for doing so much!

Mr. Taylor thanked Mr. Simon and stated, "I appreciate the work you are doing. You've accomplished a lot, and you are coming up on 100 days now. So, very proud of you and thankful for what you're doing for us." Lastly, he thanked all employees for what they do.

14. ADJOURN
Mayor Prince

Public Comment Policy:

Citizens desiring to speak at any regular meeting must provide a written request to notify the City Clerk prior to the agenda deadline. Citizens interested in commenting at a regular meeting shall sign in to speak and limit comments to no more than 3 minutes.

Mission Statement: To utilize all available resources for the development of plans, programs, and projects to improve services to the citizens of Bennettsville and establish and maintain an active role in economic and community development.